

**REMARKS**

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 44 are amended. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments do not raise any new issue, do not add new matter, and place the application in better condition for appeal. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments should be entered. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

As indicated in the Office Action, claims 14, 15, 33-39 and 43 have been allowed. For the reasons stated below, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph**

Claims 44 and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claim 44 is amended to recite that the first chamber has an area equal to 2/3 of the total area of all chambers. Support for this amendment is provided in FIG. 5c of the drawings. The specification is amended at paragraph [00051] to be consistent with amended claim 44.

The specification is amended at paragraph [00049] to describe the features recited in claim 45. Support for this amendment to the specification is provided, for example, in FIG. 2 of the drawings.

Applicants respectfully submit that the specification provides a written description of the subject matter recited in claims 44 and 45 that complies with the

provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

A. Claims 1-13, 16-25, 27-29, 31, 41, 42 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,133,137 to Petersen ("Petersen") in view of DE 195 00 383 A1 to Geissbuhler et al. ("DE '383"), and were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 2,316,664 to Brassert et al. ("Brassert") in view of DE '383. The reasons for the rejections are stated at points 4 and 5, pages 2-5, of the Office Action. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, recites a device for continuous thermal treatment of granular bulk material (granulate). The device comprises, *inter alia*, several adjacent fluidization chambers with a separate sieve bottom each through which, via a gas inlet, a fluidization gas can be injected into the first chamber at a higher pressure and/or at a higher gas speed than the fluidization gas is injected into the other chambers to fluidize the granulate. Support for the amendment to claim 1 is provided, for example, at paragraph [00018] of the specification and in allowed claim 33.

In light of the Examiner's statement at point (8), pages 5-6, of the Office Action, it is submitted that claim 1 is also patentable. Claims 2-13, 16-25, 27-29, 31, 41, 42 and 44 depend from claim 1 and, thus, are also patentable for at least the same reasons as those for which claim 1 is patentable. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

B. Claim 32 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Petersen or Brassert in view of DE '383. The reasons for the rejection are stated at point 6, page 5, of the Office Action. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 32 depends from claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 32 is patentable over the applied combination of references for at least the same reasons as those for which claim 1 is patentable. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Conclusion**

For the foregoing reasons, allowance of the application is respectfully requested. Should there be any questions regarding this reply, Applicants' undersigned representative can be reached at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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